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ABSTRACT

Based on the premise that there is a difference between intelligence and trained ability, the paper deals with developing a prevocational program for the mentally retarded in which specific skill training is provided so the client can eventually have gainful employment in a work activity center, sheltered workshop or industry. Four major factors are considered: improving basic work skills for more adequate vocational adjustment, creating a positive attitude toward work, reducing the chance of job failure, and improving social development thereby raising the level of employability. The discussion includes the use of standardized instruments for assessment, developing programs, and evaluating. (Author/SBH)

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CONTENT, METHODS, AND TECHNIQUES FOR PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

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Summary

Based on the premise that there is a difference between intelligence and trained ability, this presentation deals with developing a pre-vocational program for the mentally retarded where specific skill training is needed so the client can eventually have gainful employment in a work activity center, sheltered workshop or industry.

These four major factors are considered:

1. Improving basic work skills for more adequate vocational adjustment.
2. Creating a positive attitude toward work.
3. Reducing the chances of job failure.
4. Improving social development thereby raising the level of employability.

The discussion includes the use of standardized instruments for assessment, developing programs and evaluating.

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CONTENT, METHODS, AND TECHNIQUES FOR PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

Based on the premise that there is a difference between intelligence and trained ability, this presentation deals with developing a pre-vocational program for the mentally retarded where specific skill training is needed so the client can eventually have gainful employment in a work activity center, a sheltered workshop, or work in a community setting such as an industrial plant, office or hospitality area.

Included in the term "pre-vocational" could be any skill training that allows the retardate to secure employment. Self-help, home living, communication, sensorimotor coordination and social adjustment are skills necessary before one can successfully obtain and hold a job. Therefore, in developing a curriculum these basics must be included.

Assuming that the basic skills such as self-help skills are adequate, what then should be the goals of our program? We believe there are four major factors to be considered:

1. Improving basic work skills for more adequate vocational adjustment.
2. Creating a positive attitude toward work.
3. Reducing the chances of job failure.
4. Improving social development thereby raising the level of employability.

In order to reach our goals various objectives must be met.

The following characteristics are important to employment in service occupations, light industrial work, and other areas where the mentally retarded are most likely to be employed.

In the pre-vocational program we want to facilitate the development of the following:

Primary

1. Dexterity, coordination, discrimination and mobility.
2. Attention span, cooperation, willingness and initiative.
3. Ability to perform a task without extensive supervision and direction.
4. Ability to work independently and with others.
5. Ability to follow a routine, and stick with a task.

Secondary

1. Ability to count, alphabetize and make change.
2. Reasonable reaction to criticism and supervision.
3. Self confidence and a sense of responsibility.
4. Sociability and social sensitivity. (as indicated by verbal exchange, manners, and consideration)
5. Judgment or confidence in a work situation and the ability to make decisions.

Other objectives that must be considered, some which may be too difficult to fully accomplish in a pre-vocational program for the severely and profound. Nevertheless, is it not better to err in this direction than set limitations which may keep a client from reaching full potential.

These include:

I. Social Development

A. Manners: The client should display -

1. Understanding of the relationship between good manners and social acceptance as evidenced by his participation in class activities and by his class discussion.

2. Consideration for others as evidenced by his use of manners at the table, in traveling, in interpersonal relationships and in general courtesy.

B. Interpersonal Relationships: The client should display -

1. Behavior which would be conductive to acceptance with others as evidenced by improvement in his relationships with others.

2. An understanding of the relationship between good interpersonal relationships and social acceptance as evidenced by his participation in class activities and class discussion.

3. Improved frustration tolerance as evidenced by his improved classroom behavior.

4. The ability to initiate with others and to perpetuate a discussion as evidenced by his daily participation in class discussions.

C. Group Relationships: The client should display -

1. An understanding of the relationship between good group relationships and social acceptance as evidenced by his behavior improvement in group situations.

2. The ability to work successfully in a group as evidenced by his ability to work on a group project.

3. The ability to contribute to a group activity as evidenced by his participation in group work.

4. The ability to perform certain tasks which could be identified with the leadership role as evidenced by his participation in the class.

D. Listening Skills: The client should display -

1. An understanding of the relationship between good listening and social acceptance as evidenced by improved listening in class activities.

2. A skill in listening as evidenced by the ability to listen without interrupting the speaker.

3. A skill in listening as evidenced by his ability to follow directions given by the speaker.

4. A skill in attentive listening as evidenced by his ability to make the speaker feel he is being listened to.

E. Healthy Attitude About Occupation: The client should -

1. Demonstrate a willingness for further vocational training as evidenced by his daily attendance and interaction in classroom activities.

2. Display a positive attitude toward performing his job to the best of his ability evidenced by doing his tasks to the best of his ability.

3. Display knowledge of his own limitations as evidenced by his choosing appropriate tasks and subsequent goals.

F. Teamwork: The client should -

1. Understand the importance of teamwork as evidenced by his contributing to team activities whether assigned or voluntary.

2. Display a skill in teamwork as evidenced by successful team-group activities.

G. Job Responsibility: The client should -

1. Display his knowledge of job responsibility as evidenced by his daily attendance and efforts within the classroom.

2. Display his knowledge and skill in cleaning and caring for his own materials as evidenced by his daily practices in the classroom.

3. Display the importance of doing his job and doing it well as evidenced by completing his assigned work to the best of his ability.

H. Vocabulary: The client should -

1. Display a working knowledge of a basic vocabulary correlated to vocational training as evidenced by his ability to identify such occupational terms as employee, employer, etc.

II. Occupational Skills

A. Following Directions: The client should -

1. Display skill in following oral directions as evidenced by his responding with a minimum of confusion.

2. Display skill in following directions as evidenced by being able to communicate his failure to understand the given directions.

B. Time: The client should -

1. Display skill in telling time as evidenced by his successful participation in class activities.

C. Punctuality

1. The client should display knowledge of the importance of being punctual as evidenced by his being at school and meals on time.

D. Money: The client should -

1. Display skill in making change as evidenced by his participation in class activities.

2. Display knowledge in spending money as evidenced by his participation in class activities and class discussions.

3. Display knowledge and positive attitudes about saving money as evidenced by his participation in class activities and class discussions.

To accomplish these goals every client needs an individual rehabilitation program drawn up that best meets his/her needs, interests and abilities, which can be done by using any number of standardized assessment instruments available.

Some of the instruments used in the United States are:

The Geist Picture Interest Inventory: Revised Manual, Published by Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles, California, USA. It provides a useful interest inventory in working with those having limited verbal abilities and thus facilitates counseling and guidance with verbally handicapped individuals.

The T.M.R. Performance Profile for Severely and Moderately Retarded: Published by Reporting Service for Children, Ridgefield, New Jersey, U.S.A., developed by classroom teachers. The profile consists of six major areas which are as follows: Social Behavior, Self-care, Communication, Basic Knowledge, Practical Skills, and Body Usage.

The Redea Program, a project under the supervision of the Dallas County Mental Health/Retardation Center in Texas, U.S.A., for training behaviors of students functioning between developmental ages of 0-7. Each individual is first assessed in visual and auditory perception, perceptual motor, oral language and functional living.

A.A.M.D. Adaptive Behavior Scale: Published by the American Association on Mental Deficiency and Translated into 5 languages is a behavior

rating scale. It is divided into two parts. Part I is organized along developmental lines. Part Two is a survey of social expectations both in residential institutions and in the community.

The Fairview Scales were developed by Fairview State Hospital, California, U.S.A. They are designed for use primarily with the severely and profoundly retarded. The scales are divided into the following sub scales: SELF-HELP, LANGUAGE EVALUATION, SOCIAL SKILLS, and PROBLEM BEHAVIOR.

The Inventory of Habilitation Programs for Mentally Handicapped Adults is a comprehensive curriculum designed to serve as a direct assessment and teaching instrument to prepare the mentally handicapped for eventual employment and semi-independent living in the community.

It was developed and written by an experienced, seven-member teaching team which serves mentally handicapped adults at the Portland Habilitation Center in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.

Although the INVENTORY is very easily used with children who are in need of the hundreds of skills which it develops, its major thrust and reason for being is to serve ADULTS through an adult-oriented curriculum emphasizing adult materials, adult language, adult treatment, adult expectations.

The INVENTORY develops 4 separate habilitation programs. They are: Social Behaviors Program, Practical Living Skills Program, Socialization Skills Program, and Job Skills Program.

In addition to an assessment instrument consideration should also be given to Psychological, medical and social history reports. Armed with a picture of the "whole" client, and discussion among an interdisciplinary team including parents and client, the program is ready to be designed.

Each program written should include:

1. Terminal objective stated in behavioral terms.
2. Prerequisites needed to meet objective, e.g. does the client have the basic skill or physical ability to reach objective.

3. Phase: What are you going to teach? Each skill must be task analyzed so taught/ trained in developmental sequenced order.

4. Stimulus - could be imitation modelling, etc. and what materials, place, time.

5. Response - define in behavioral terms - simple to complex.

6. Consequence - immediate - What are you going to do - if punishers are to be used list these.

7. Schedule of reinforcements.

8. Criterion - Set number of times client must do item correct.

Evaluation - Evaluation should be a continuous and an on-going process to determine program results and necessary modifications in order to meet the changing needs of the clients. For motivating purposes and as a measure of progress, charts and graphs are useful and will help to determine any changes or adjustments that may be necessary.

The team appraoch in which various disciplines work closely together should be utilized in all evaluation procedures.

Near the end of the program the original assessment instruments should be used as a post-test to measure progress.

Programmers may vary in their approach. However, the fundamental principles are always present. The following two sample programs are illustrative.

The first written by Dr. Marc Gold:

Purpose: For the client to be able to sort bolts into catagories of size, length and head shape.

Materials: Several hundred bolts with the following characteristics:
1. Hexagon head, 1 inch x 3/8 inch (all bolts standard thread)
2. Hexagon head, 1 inch x ¼ inch
3. Hexagon head, 3/4 inch x 3/8 inch
4. Hexagon head, 3/4 inch x 1/4 inch
5. Hexagon head, 1/2 inch x 3/8 inch
6. Hexagon head, 1/2 inch x 1/4 inch
7. Round head, 1 inch x 3/8 inch
8. Round head, 1 inch x 1/4 inch
9. Round head, 3/4 inch x 3/8 inch

10. Round head, 3/4 inch x 1/4 inch
11. Round head, 1/2 inch x 3/8 inch
12. Round head, 1/2 inch x 1/4 inch

The bolts described have differences on three dimensions - head shape, length and width.

Techniques and Concepts to be illustrated: Criterion, cue redundancy, easy-to-hard sequence.

Procedure:

A. Establish criterion: When the client sorts the pile twice without errors it will be assumed he has learned the task that is represented by that pile.

B. Present the client with a pile containing the Hexagonal, 1 inch by 1/4 inch bolts and the Round 1/2 inch by 3/8 bolts. What you have done is to provide a task on which there are three relevant and redundant dimensions.

C. Either use labels and commands the client knows or, nonverbally, remove one kind of bolt and put it in one place(container) and the same with the other bolt.

D. Ask the client to go ahead. If he has difficulty, you start to slowly sort the pile and encourage him to do the same.

E. Following criterion change the task to each of the following, establishing criterion each time.

1. Make all dimensions relevant and redundant. That is sort Hexagonal 1 inch by 3/8 inch from Round 1/2 inch by 1/4 inch bolts.
2. Keep one dimension constant and irrelevant and sort for the other two. That is, use one head shape and sort 1 inch by 3/8 inch from 1/2 inch by 1/4 inch bolts. Or, use one length and sort hexagonal 1 inch by 1/4 inch from Round 1 inch by 3/8 inch bolts.
3. Keep two dimensions constant and irrelevant and sort for the third. That is, sort Hexagonal 1 inch by 3/8 inch from Hexagonal 1 inch by 1/4 inch bolts and so on.
4. Do steps 1 and 2 above using the 3/4 inch with the 1 inch and/or the 3/8 inch bolts. This will constitute a move toward a finer discrimination.
5. Use all bolts and sort with all dimensions relevant (12 piles). You might need to start without 3/4 inch bolts. In this case there would be eight piles.
6. Use all the bolts and have variable irrelevant dimensions. That is, sort all of the Hexagonal bolts from all of the Round bolts. In this case length and width would vary, but would not be relevant.
7. Use other combinations, remembering the rules about cue redundancy, relevant and variable irrelevant dimensions and easy-to-hard sequences.

Evaluation: If the client is able to perform at criterion given any combination of categories, he has not only learned to sort bolts but has developed a sorting skill that will transfer to many other tasks.

The second program was developed at Shapiro Developmental Center:

SHAPIRO DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER - SOCIAL INTERACTION SKILLS

PROGRAM TITLE: Describing Basic Feelings

PROGRAM: To provide the resident with a vocabulary which will effectively describe how they feel.

SETTING: Program should be conducted in an atmosphere condusive for conversation, free of excessive auditory and visual distractions.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE: _____sessions per week.

MATERIALS: none

PRE-REQUISITES: Ability to verbalize and conceptualize.

BASELINE: Use "Describing Basic Feelings Checklist" (Pretest Section)

STEPS: This program consists of the following steps:
1. What it means to be happy (Procedure #1)
2. What it means to be sad (procedure #2)
3. What it means to feel good (Procedure #3)
4. What it means to be bad (Procedure #4)
5. What it means to like someone(Procedure #5)
6. What it means to dislike someone (Procedure #6)

PROCEDURE #1

1. Trainer asks each resident, one at a time, "(Name), what does it mean to be happy? Appropriate answers would include: a. Happy could be a good feeling inside of you.
b. Happy could be when you are not sad.
c. Happy is shown when you smile or laugh.

2. If correct, trainer gives social reinforcement.
3. If incorrect, trainer says "not quite".
4. If resident does not respond, allow five seconds for an answer, repeat the question. If resident still does not respond, trainer says, "You think about it" and goes on to the next resident until all have been asked the question.
5. After all residents have had a chance to respond, trainer goes over the appropriate answers listed in step one and gives the residents a chance to agree or disagree with his or her answers.
6. Then trainer asks, "(Name), when would you feel happy?" Appropriate answers would include: a. You might feel happy if someone gives you something nice (present).
b. You might feel happy if someone does something nice for you.
c. You might feel happy if you see or hear or eat etc. something you like.
d. You might feel happy after seeing or hearing something funny - it makes you laugh etc.
7. Repeat steps 2-5 as appropriate.

Similar questions are asked for the other five sections.

DOCUMENTATION: If the resident attended or participated in this program, trainer will indicate this on the monthly Participation Record Form.

CORRECT RESPONSE: Defined as answering the question appropriately.

INCORRECT RESPONSE: Defined as not answering the question with appropriate information.

GRADUATION CRITERION: When the resident correctly answers five of the six questions on post-test 1 conducted by the trainer and on post-test two conducted by the program monitor.

MAINTENANCE: During activities of daily living, the trainer will occasionally ask the resident how he/she feels or if he/she feels sad or happy etc.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the mentally retarded do grow up. Yet our education system seems far too often to forget their needs as persons constantly in a state of change, with new needs at each new stage of their development. They can be trained with proper programs to develop skills that can lead to gainful employment. Thus, giving them a sense of self-confidence, independence,and being a productive worth-while member of society.